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LETTER DATED 14 APRIL 1998 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF GEORGIA TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

Yet another horrible act of ethnic-related massacre of Georgian civilians in the Gali region vividly illustrates the wrath and ferocity with which the Abkhaz separatists treat a handful of Georgian returnees in the so-called security zones of Abkhazia, Georgia.

On 2 April 1998, a well-armed group of 50 to 60 Abkhazians easily passed a checkpoint of Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) peacekeepers and made an unspeakable inroad into the village of Gudava, ransacking the houses of innocent civilians and remorselessly killing three Georgian teenagers. The assailants left the theatre of carnage just as unhampered as they had moved in and returned to Ochamchira, taking the bodies of the killed and about 20 hostages.

Evidently, the fledgling peace and some positive steps in the peace process, achieved as a result of strong international efforts, are not conducive to the plans of reactionary forces, who would go to any extent to retain the atmosphere of chaos and impunity in the region.

The Government of Georgia ascribes great significance to the Geneva process under the auspices of the United Nations, believes that this process is the key to the settlement of the conflict and is deeply concerned at any action directed against it, no matter where it may come from.

We express belief that the Security Council, you personally, and the international community as a whole, will duly evaluate this crime and will make every effort to prevent the escalation of tension, fraught with the emergence of more serious obstacles to the return of refugees and displaced persons, and even the failure of the peace process itself.

May I ask your kind assistance in having the present letter circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Peter CHKHEIDZE
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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